

Introduction

Drunk driving threatens the safety of our roadways and our citizens. A look at traffic statistics shows:

- ▶ There were 17,419 alcohol-related fatalities in the United States in 2002, an average of one fatality every 30 minutes.
- ▶ An estimated 258,000 persons were injured in crashes where police reported that alcohol was present — an average of one person injured approximately every two minutes (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Traffic Safety Facts 2002 – Alcohol <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pdf/nrd-30/NCSA/TSF2002/2002alcfacts.pdf>).

That's unacceptable. But there is a way for you and your community to help address this serious issue. The **Road Crew** offers a solution that meets three major goals:

- 1) reducing the number of alcohol impaired drivers on the road;
- 2) decreasing alcohol-related crashes; and
- 3) improving community safety.

97% of the driving age public see drinking and driving by others as a threat to their own personal safety and that of their family. – NHTSA Traffic Tech 2001 National Survey on Drinking and Driving
<http://www.nhtsa.dot.gov/people/injury/alcohol/traffic-tech2003/TT280.pdf>

The **Road Crew** is a new and innovative approach that will help you develop community-based strategies for providing and promoting alternative transportation services to reduce the incidence of drunk driving. It is built on a social marketing research and knowledge base that examines how 21-to-34-year-old single men behave and shows how a system can be developed to curb driving after excessive drinking. The **Road Crew** model was developed after extensive research and demonstrations that showed these methods can work. This toolbox is designed to provide concrete information and spark ideas about how to launch a successful program. You will find sections on establishing a project team, evaluating transportation options and developing incentives that will encourage people to avoid getting behind the wheel after excessive drinking. There are worksheets and other resources to help you develop a ride service that meets your community's need to keep drunk drivers off the road.



Introduction

Why This, Why Now?

In the past, efforts to discourage drunk driving while encouraging responsible behavior have largely relied on public education, traffic enforcement and tougher legislation. These efforts have helped, but a serious problem remains: approximately 1.4 million drivers were arrested in 2001 for driving under the influence of alcohol or narcotics. This is an arrest rate of one for every 137 licensed drivers in the United States (National Highway Traffic Safety Administration Traffic Safety Facts 2002 – Alcohol <http://www-nrd.nhtsa.dot.gov/pdf/nrd-30/NCSA/TSF2002/2002alcfacts.pdf>).

The biggest demographic group of alcohol-impaired drivers who crash consists of men age 21 to 34. In Wisconsin, for example, more than 80% of drivers who have been cited for operating a vehicle while intoxicated are men. Our brothers, sons, husbands and fathers who are driving drunk do so at an enormous risk to themselves and their communities. Drunk drivers who survive crashes are perhaps injured themselves, face loss of freedom and income as a result of jail or prison sentences, lose driving privileges and suffer damage to their reputations. Often, these drivers have harmed others. Members of the community are vulnerable to being involved in someone else's crash, through no fault of their own.

DRUNK OR IMPAIRED?

Some people who are involved with the topic of alcohol-related crashes use the adjectives "drunk" and "impaired" to mean the same thing. Others see them as having different meanings. For the purposes of the **Road Crew**, the terms are used interchangeably. Whether you call them drunk or impaired, the point is that people who have had too much to drink shouldn't be driving.

Changing Behaviors, Not Cultures

In many communities, bars and taverns are neighborhood social centers that inspire strong community loyalties. Festivals and sports events often feature beer tents. This project doesn't try to change a culture of drinking. Instead, it seeks to help communities offer new options that will allow people who have had too much to drink get home safely without driving themselves or riding with an impaired driver.



Introduction

This new approach to reducing drunk driving is based on social marketing, which borrows commercial marketing techniques that are commonly used to motivate consumers to try new products. Commercial marketers realize that to get people to try a new product, it must be appealing and serve a need. If the “need” is for people to get home after excessive drinking, there must be alternative “appealing” ways for them to do so. This initiative focuses on those who are not necessarily identified as problem drinkers, but who need to get home after an evening of excessive drinking without driving themselves.

Taking the social marketing approach, communities will develop new and appealing “products,” such as alternative forms of transportation to and from bars or restaurants. Then, just as commercial marketers provide incentives to get consumers to try new products, incentives will be provided to get those who may engage in excessive drinking to try the new transportation system.

Why do people drive when they are impaired? The hassle of finding another ride home is most often cited as the reason, but not recognizing their impairment or being too impaired to make a good decision are other significant factors. Given the variety of reasons and deeply ingrained habits, changing driving behavior is a difficult challenge.

By providing another transportation option, you can reduce the number of alcohol-impaired drivers, just as other communities have done. With fewer impaired drivers on the road, the number of crashes, injuries and deaths drops. By adding social marketing to the set of available tools, communities have a greater potential to make a difference.

Anticipating Objections

You might encounter people in the community who say, “Why spend all this time and effort to keep drunks off the road when you should just try to get them to stop drinking altogether?” There is no dispute that excessive drinking is unhealthy and has many negative effects on families, friends and the community. But while excessive drinking itself can be self-destructive, it is drunk driving that threatens the safety of the community at large. This project is about making roads safer for the entire community by decreasing the number of drunk drivers. In addition, by trying to change drinking habits, you may alienate your target ride service customers; they want to drink, but you can help them stay off the roadways after they choose to do so.



Introduction

Some people might feel that you are actually encouraging greater consumption by providing rides. In focus groups early in the process of developing the **Road Crew**, participants were asked if they would drink more if they didn't have to drive themselves home. A common response was "we already drink as much as we can; we couldn't possibly drink more." Follow up research showed that there was not an increase in drinking with the implementation of a ride service.

On the other hand, bar or restaurant owners might think that you are trying to eliminate drinking altogether or hurt their businesses. Instead, they may benefit if the community can find a way to take care of patrons who have had too much to drink. Research has shown that after implementing a ride program in their community, many tavern owners felt their sales went up. They attributed the increase to new customers who felt comfortable drinking outside of their homes when they knew a ride service was available.

Still other critics may ask why you are putting time and resources toward "rides for drunks" when you could improve transportation for senior citizens, the disabled, or other individuals within the community. It would be wonderful to have unlimited resources to provide something for everyone. Again, the argument of "why this" gets back to community safety.

Road Crew Social Marketing Model

There are many tools in place to help you embark upon an initiative to increase roadway safety in your community.

- ▶ The **Road Crew** brand, including a logo and slogan, has been developed to position the **Road Crew** as a fun, affordable, hassle free way to enjoy a night on the town with out having to worry about driving home.
- ▶ **Road Crew** program experts, working with your coalition along with an advisory group of young bar patrons, are available to help you customize the brand to reflect the details of your program and the preferences of young bar patrons in your community.
- ▶ The toolbox provides details on how to launch a program, from assembling a coalition and choosing the form of transportation you will offer, to how to provide the right incentives to attract and retain riders.



Introduction

Important Concepts

The resources that follow will help you develop a program that incorporates these key elements:

- ▶ Social marketing principles that give equal consideration to the product (the ride service) and the incentives that go with it. Both aspects must appeal to the customer so strongly that they will change their behavior and make a new choice.
- ▶ A transportation method that provides appealing options for rides to, from and between bars.
- ▶ 21-to-34-year-old male drinkers as active participants within a broad-based coalition. They will have a crucial role in providing feedback to the team on ride options and incentives.
- ▶ Endorsement of local government and law enforcement. They can help with barriers such as parking tickets and loitering ordinances, plus their endorsement enhances the credibility of the program.
- ▶ Sources of financial support and in-kind contributions to help the system become self-sustaining. This may include charging fares for rides or trading rides for volunteer time.

Good luck to you and your community as you launch this worthy endeavor.

